

BEFORE
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF
SOUTH CAROLINA
DOCKET NO. 2005-271-C - ORDER NO. 2005-520
OCTOBER 3, 2005

IN RE: Motion by the Office of Regulatory Staff to)	ORDER WAIVING
Waive Qualifications for Lifeline/Linkup For)	QUALIFICATIONS OF
Victims of Hurricane Katrina Pending Action)	LIFELINE/LINKUP FOR
by the FCC.)	VICTIMS OF
)	HURRICANE KATRINA
)	PENDING ACTION BY
)	THE FCC

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the “Commission”) on the Office of Regulatory Staff’s (“ORS”) request that this Commission issue an Order waiving certain qualifications of the Linkup and Lifeline programs such that the victims of Hurricane Katrina may be eligible to receive this assistance.

The Lifeline and Linkup programs were established in order to enable low income households to subscribe to local exchange services by reducing initial service and installation connection charges as well as monthly fees such that basic local telephone service can be made available to all South Carolina residents. The ORS has made this motion in light of the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina along the Gulf Coast states of Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi, and given that numerous displaced persons from those states who have relocated to South Carolina do not possess the economic means to provide for themselves or their families.

Pursuant to various orders of this Commission established in Docket No. 87-625-C, the Commission established certain criteria in order to qualify for the Linkup and Lifeline programs. Additionally, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) established certain criteria to qualify for the Lifeline and Linkup programs at the federal level.

We take notice of reports that the FCC is considering expanding, on a temporary basis, the conditions necessary to participate in the programs to include those who lived in the area affected by Hurricane Katrina. We additionally take judicial notice that hundreds of thousands of people have already registered with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (“FEMA”) to receive federal disaster assistance and that the South Carolina Department of Social Services (“SC DSS”) will automatically enroll all evacuees to South Carolina in the Food Stamp program, and those who specifically qualify into the Medicaid program. Most evacuees will, therefore, qualify for Linkup and Lifeline assistance. Despite this fact, in order to ensure that all evacuees can obtain telecommunications service on at least a short term, emergency basis we agree to approve the ORS Motion.

Because of the foregoing, we make the following:

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Pursuant to Public Service Commission Docket No. 87-625-C this Commission established certain criteria for individuals to qualify for the Linkup and Lifeline programs. These criteria include that the individuals are receiving some form of

low income assistance such as Food Stamps and Medicaid or Temporary Aid to Needy Families.

2. Due to the recent devastation caused along the Gulf Coast as a result of Hurricane Katrina, numerous persons from that region have relocated to South Carolina. According to the SC DSS, all evacuees to South Carolina from this area will be enrolled for Food Stamps. All evacuees moved by the federal government to South Carolina will thus meet the existing criteria for the Lifeline/Linkup program.

3. Any individuals who relocate to South Carolina from the Gulf Coast for a long-term period will likely seek permanent housing and residential telephone service and may, therefore, require assistance from the Lifeline/Linkup program not available under current criteria.

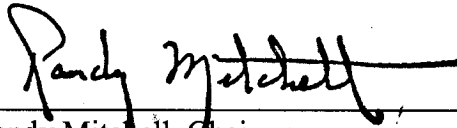
4. In order to provide assistance to these individuals, and in light of anticipated changes in the federal criteria, ORS is hereby directed that if the FCC expands this program, that ORS work with FEMA, the SC DSS and other state and federal agencies to ensure the purpose behind these programs is being met and that the appropriate persons are receiving aid.

5. ORS is further directed to prepare appropriate guidelines for waivers of and relaxation of the eligibility requirements for the Lifeline and Linkup programs in case the FCC does not expand the program. These waivers should be of no more than six months' duration and must be non-discriminatory in nature.

6. ORS shall present the requested guidelines to this Commission by no later than September 29, 2005.

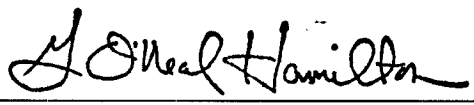
We therefore ORDER that the ORS Motion be granted so that if the FCC expands its eligibility requirements for Lifeline and Linkup, that this Commission permit the expansion of our eligibility requirements in a commensurate manner so that the victims of hurricane Katrina be eligible to receive this aid.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



Randy Mitchell, Chairman

ATTEST:



G. O'Neal Hamilton, Vice-Chairman

(SEAL)